

**Department of Commerce  
Occupational Safety and Health Program Report  
2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2004  
July 1, 2004**



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## Introduction

The Department of Commerce (DOC) Office of Occupational Safety and Health (OOSH) is proud to debut its quarterly Occupational Safety and Health Program Report. The new layout conforms to the Department of Labor's (DOL) recommended safety and occupational health reporting format. Additionally, the content provides DOC management and staff Departmental performance measures consistent with the President's Safety, Health and Return-to-Employment (SHARE) initiative launched on January 9, 2004, where each Federal department and agency is directed to: lower workplace injury and illness rates; lower lost-time injury and illness case rates; ensure timely reporting of injuries and illness; and decrease lost days.

Lastly, the report provides analysis, solutions and highlights DOC occupational safety and health programmatic efforts throughout DOC.

## Performance Measures and Analysis

DOC reported 256 injury and illness cases during the first two quarters of FY 2004 year-to-date (YTD), 106 that were lost-time cases (See Figure 1).

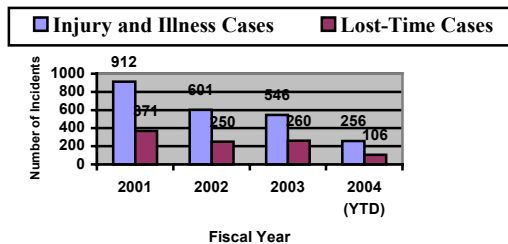


Figure 1. Total injury and illness cases and total lost-time cases for the past 4 fiscal years (YTD).

If the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter data is extrapolated throughout the year, DOC will realize a 5.1% decrease of injury and illness claims and a 17.1% decrease of lost-time claims when compared to FY 2003.

When the data in Figure 1 is converted to rates for comparison across agencies, the injury and illness case rate was 0.69% and the lost-time case rate was 0.29% for the first 2 quarters of FY 2004 (See Figure 2). If 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter data extrapolated the Department will realize a 5.4% decrease in injury illness rates and 20% decrease lost-time case rates when compared to FY 2003.

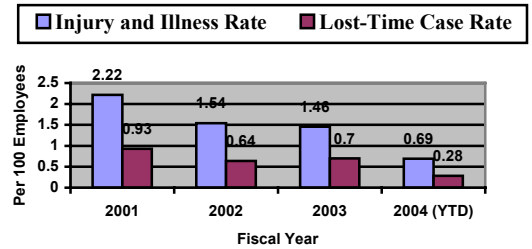


Figure 2. Total injury and illness case rates and total lost-time case rates for the past 4 fiscal years (YTD).

For FY 2004 (YTD) slips, trips, falls, and struck by incidents make up 58% of the injury and illness types reported this year and continue to be DOC's main source of injuries and illness claims. Information on all types of injuries is provided in Figure 3. To address these issues, OOSH is working on an awareness program that can be exported to the Bureaus and agencies.

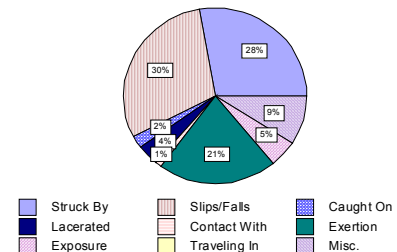


Figure 3. Injury type as a percentage of total injuries FY 2004 (YTD).

Consistent with the President's SHARE initiative, DOC is now measuring average lost production workdays, which is the average number of workdays lost due to an injury or illness. To date, DOC has seen a 10% increase in lost production days when compared to FY 2003 (See Figure 4). This increase may be attributed to the agencies' slowness to process workers' compensation claims after an injury or illness which creates delays in medical services rendered and ultimately extends the time a worker is not at work. Timeliness of processing injury and illness claims is addressed in Figure 5.

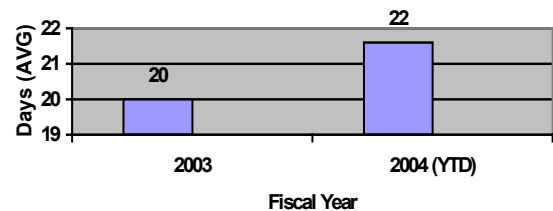


Figure 4. Lost production days for the past 2 fiscal years (YTD).

Figure 5 depicts the average time it takes for DOC to process mandatory workers' compensation (WC) paperwork to DOL's Office of Workers' Compensation Program (OWCP), where the standard is 14 calendar days.

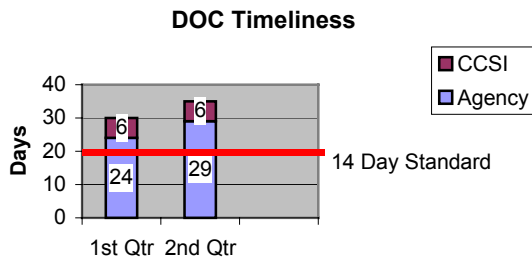


Figure 5. Timeliness of processing injury and illness claims.

During both quarters of FY 2004, DOC has exceeded the 14-day reporting period to OWCP, where the delays are related to the Department's slowness to fill out and forward the required WC paperwork to DOL. As depicted in Figure 5, DOC agencies and bureaus take 24-29 days to forward claims to the Departments claims manager, Contract Claims Services Inc. (CCSI), who then process the claims to DOL within 6 days. To improve WC processing, OOSH is measuring bureau and agency timeliness to target and provide standardized workers' compensation training next quarter. During the long-term, OOSH is working with DOL to review their Safety Health Information Management System (SHIMS) to improve timeliness.

For the first 2 quarters of FY 2004, DOC's workers' compensation costs are \$7,482,235. If the data is extrapolated throughout the year, the Department's workers' compensation cost appear to be stabilizing with FY 2003 costs (See Figure 6), which was a 4.2% decrease from FY 2002. To realize further reductions DOC is working with DOL to expedite claims processing with SHIMS and DOC instituted an innovative approach to controvert WC claims.

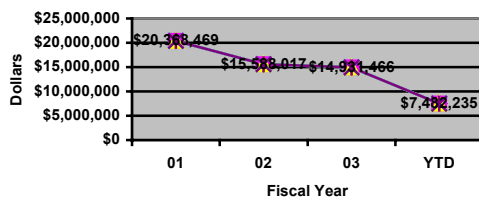


Figure 6 Workers' compensation costs for the past 4 fiscal years (YTD).

Additionally, the DOC's Continuation of Pay (COP) costs appear to be stabilizing where the first 2 quarters have resulted in a total of \$156,603 (See Figure 7). DOC is working with DOL and established a new process to controvert claims to continue potential reductions in COP costs.

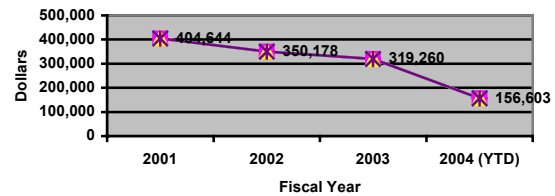


Figure 7. COP costs for the past 4 fiscal years (YTD).

OOSH received 55 responses to the DOC Safety and Health survey. Table 1 provides data indicating the continued perception that there is a lack of safety and health improvements within DOC. OOSH is developing an improved survey to clearly identify potential areas of concern and improvement.

Have you noticed any safety and health improvements in your work area or in DOC as a whole during this the second quarter?		
Answer	Response	Percent
No	36	65.45%
Yes	19	34.55%

Table 1. Safety and health survey.

### DOC Occupational Safety and Health Highlights

During the 2nd quarter of FY 2004 DOC has received programmatic funding to support the DOC OOSH vision "The Way Ahead". DOC is developing partnerships and leveraging resources with DOL, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Army to standardize Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) program oversight and eliminate workplace injuries and their associated costs through the President's SHARE initiative.

Please note: the DOC Quarterly OSH Council meeting has moved from the 2nd Thursday of the month to the 3rd Thursday. The next DOC OSH Council meeting is Thursday, July 15, 2004, 1:30 P.M. – 3:00 P.M., HCHB, ROOM 6800.